

# Christianity and Crisis

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DETROIT

## Our Fifteenth Birthday

WE launched this modest journalistic venture in 1940, fifteen years ago. We are not significant enough to make much of the decade and a half of our life, though before we finish this account of this brief span in the history of the world and of our own nation we will have occasion to ask our friends to help us to keep alive as long as there is any indication of our usefulness to the Church, to the conscience of Christians, and to our nation.

We want rather to meditate with you upon the significance of the strange panorama of history which has unfolded before us in this decade and a half. In 1941 our reluctant nation, which had shivered indecisively on the brink of a great decision, was catapulted into a war which many in the nation wished to avoid. It was forced to accept responsibility for its great power, the existence of which had not been realized. The nation wanted to separate its power from its responsibilities, which many of us felt to be inevitably concomitant with the power. The nation as nation tried desperately to cling to the security, or seeming security, of neutrality though every event in history proved that our power was too great and the world was too narrow to make that policy morally defensible or politically feasible.

*Christianity and Crisis* was prompted by an impulse within the Christian Church in America. It was founded by Protestant leaders who were disturbed by the alliance between the apostles of a prudential neutrality and the apostles of Christian perfectionism. We did not believe that neutrality was prudent or moral for the nation when the issue in the world was a struggle between despotism and freedom. But above all we did not believe that it was a mark of grace in Christians to avoid responsibility for the preservation of justice for the sake of preserving either individual or collective purity. Our response to the world crisis may be deemed political in the sense that we were "interventionists" in the jargon of that day. But it was also religious and theological in the sense that the wide vogue

of a type of perfectionism, which thought it possible to live in the world without facing the fact that political responsibility and guilt were inextricably intermingled, was regarded by us, not as the flower of the Christian life but as an aberration. We were all more or less children of the Reformation rather than of the Enlightenment, and our journal was founded to resist the illusions of the Enlightenment in both politics and theology. As children of the Reformation we acknowledged that it is impossible to live without forgiveness, and that the forgiveness of God includes both the sins which we commit which we ought not to commit as well as the sins which we commit when we try to do good, in this instance when we resist tyranny. Thus the "Crisis" in our title was meant in the first instance to indicate the historical crisis of that particular era. But more profoundly it was meant to indicate the permanent crisis in which the whole human enterprise stood.

We wanted, in short, to make some modest contributions to the reorientation of American Protestantism to the political order as well as to help to guide the conscience of Christians in making decisions as citizens in response to the crisis, which our nation faced.

All that was only 15 years ago. History moves today with such accelerated pace that it is hardly possible to think oneself back into the moods and problems of a day so comparatively recent. If we survey the drama of this brief period of history in our own nation and in the world we must be struck not only with the swiftness of the pace but with the emergence of unpredictable developments in this brief period. Perhaps it would be more modest to record that the situation which we now face might have been seen by anyone wise enough to gauge the deeper currents of history. But in any case there were no historians, no prophets or seers, who predicted anything like the historic situation which we now face.

## *Fifteenth Anniversary Issue*

This situation is determined by three dominant characteristics. The first is the phenomenal development of American power. We entered two world wars reluctantly and peripherally. We emerged from the second war incomparably the strongest nation on earth. A continental economy, a comparative immunity from the ravages of war, a high degree of technical proficiency in a technical age and perhaps, as our critics like to suggest, a passion for material advantages, all entered into the growth of the American hegemony. In any event, we find ourselves the hegemonous nation in an alliance of free nations, bearing vast responsibilities and exercising tremendous power, though only a brief while ago we were reluctant to acknowledge the power or to accept the responsibility.

The second development was the growth and consolidation of the world wide secular religio-political movement which had developed in Western civilization during the first world war and with which we were allied during the second world war. We certainly did not anticipate the virulence of the fanaticism generated by this new religion nor the nature of the despotism which would be constructed on the basis of its utopian illusions. Nevertheless, it is only a perverse hindsight which would hold us responsible for this alliance with one despotism, in our conflict with another tyranny, though that alliance was certainly charged with ironic elements. If we had understood the Christian interpretation of our existence we might indeed have had a better understanding of the peculiar demonry of this combination of the lust for power and dreams of perfection which give communism such attractive power.

That religion spread throughout the world. Vanquished in Western society, for which it was intended, by the achievements in justice of democratic governments, which obviated the revolutionary resentments it exploited, it became the dominant religious and political force in Asia and more recently in Africa. There the social resentments of a disintegrating agrarian-feudal economy and the wounded pride of peoples subject till yesterday to imperial domination by the Western powers, provided the fuel for the fires of communist engines of revolution.

Thus we find ourselves engaged in a "cold war," a long struggle with communist despotism across the vast expanses of Asia. We are at a disadvantage in this struggle because our wealth and power seem to fit the communist charge of exploitation as the only source of wealth. Both our wealth and our lack of apprenticeship in manipulating the forces of international politics are grave handicaps in the task of bringing the world through this crisis without catastrophe.

The third great development which has determined

the main outlines of our contemporary destiny, is the discovery of nuclear fission and the consequent armament race in atomic weapons. In addition to the fact that atomic weapons change the whole dimension of a possible war by the prospects of suicidal destructiveness, this development has refuted one of the dearest dogmas in the creed of modernity. That dogma was the assumption that scientific progress would inevitably redound to the benefit of mankind. Now we know that any increment of man's freedom over natural forces is fraught with both good and evil possibilities.

Thus we are engaged in a desperate struggle with a despotism on the edge of an abyss of atomic destruction. It was generally assumed until yesterday that such struggles would inevitably lead to final catastrophe. Indeed, the General Assembly of the World Council gave credence to this belief as recently as last summer. As a matter of fact the one ray of hope in a very dark situation is the gradual recognition by all peoples that both sides are so afraid of atomic suicide that it is now fairly certain that neither side will consciously begin the final struggle. Either side may of course stumble into an unsought struggle. The chief danger is that local contests cannot be avoided, and any of the trials of strength may start the dreaded general conflagration.

Thus we are involved in a "crisis" quite different from the one which shook this nation and the world fifteen years ago. To survive it requires more patience than we have ever been called upon to produce before and more than is easy for a nation which is not accustomed to frustration.

We ought not to engage in the proud assertion that the "Christian" answer is the only possible one in this situation, particularly when so many Christians believe that the Christian faith has a simple moral solution for the predicament. That answer is for the nations to disavow the use of atomic weapons. Since such a disavowal might increase the danger of war, and since war cannot be avoided without running the risk of it, it is not the business of the Church to offer statesmen solutions which they must instinctively regard as irrelevant, but rather to throw the light of the Christian faith upon the predicament of man, the permanent crisis in which his history stands, which makes such moral dilemmas inevitable.

*Christianity and Crisis* thought it had a relevant counsel to the nation in the days when irresponsibility was confused with guiltlessness and guiltlessness with purity. We believe that it is just as necessary today to draw upon the resources of the Christian faith when the "realists" among us are tempted to heedlessness and the idealists think they have a simple moral solution for our predicament.

We believe that the Christian counsel to this nation should be primarily religious, rather than purely moral. That does not mean that it ought to be reminded of those abstract "spiritual values," but that the Church should regard it as one of its functions to remind the nation in its majesty of a divine majesty before which even great nations are as "a drop in the bucket." The Church should assume the prophetic role and try to moderate the pride and heedlessness of a great nation which is tempted to "sit as a queen" and declare "I shall never know sorrow." For certainly the chief danger to this fortunate, and yet imperiled, nation is that we should make the age-old, yet ever new, mistake of overestimating the power and the wisdom of men and of nations, more particularly the wisdom of foreseeing the impenetrable future.

This brings us once more by a perhaps ludicrous juxtaposition, from a consideration of the world crisis in its grand and tragic dimensions to the story of our little journalistic venture, called *Christianity and Crisis*. Our journalistic birth was a response to the particular crisis of another day. We have continued to live and to bear witness to the Christian faith and its relevance to world events both because the crisis, though changed, continued and because we found other ways of serving the Church, more particularly by keeping the American church in contact with the world-wide church. Our suc-

cess has been a modest one. We do not pretend to judge it in the spiritual dimension. We merely mean that it has been modest, judged journalistically. But we have won a goodly number of readers and some very loyal friends, who have given us financial support because our subscriptions did not make us self supporting. Recently these friends have given new proof of their loyalty and generosity. We would, however, have a more secure future if more of our friends and subscribers would enroll under our new plan of "associates" and would promise annual contributions of stated amounts from ten to one hundred dollars. Therefore, we will make this anniversary a kind of "plebiscite" on our usefulness.

The plebiscite is a rather simple one. If you believe that we have served our purpose and had better "cease to be," you need do nothing at all, nor need you do anything if you should believe that we never served a useful purpose. But if you think that our service to the nation, to the Church and to the conscience of Christians is good enough to warrant continuance, we would appreciate a birthday gift of the promise of annual support. This appeal does not apply to the many friends and subscribers who have already voted by their generous support or who cannot afford a gift.

We only hope that our life does not "peter out" as ignominiously as this birthday meditation has ended in a financial appeal.

R. N.

## Social Problems Then and Now

L I S T O N P O P E

A SIGNIFICANT anniversary generally evokes reminiscence, often nostalgic in mood, about the earliest beginnings of that which is being celebrated, and provokes comparison of the hapless present with that halcyon time. This issue of *Christianity and Crisis* celebrates the fifteenth anniversary of this small journal. The editors have seldom indulged a backward look, and they have no inclination to regard the world of 1939 as a lost Arcadia. The journal was founded in protest against varieties of Christian opinion that seemed utterly lost in a world far from Arcady.

A comparison of things past and present may nevertheless be useful on occasion, if only to draw a guide line for the future. I propose to compare the specific social problems of 1939 with those of 1955.

In 1939 attention was swinging rapidly from a depression that had prostrated a good part of the world to the threat of a new war of Hitler's concoction. But the New Deal was still too recent to have lost its controversial aspect. During the 1930's economic questions were central in American thought, and especially questions having to do with

labor unions and overarching forms of economic organization. The depression had shaken the nation to its foundations and the search for a better economy continued throughout the decade.

The rise of the C.I.O. and the enactment of Social Security legislation at the middle of the decade continued to be debated hotly in 1939. The great organizing drives in the steel and automobile and other mass-production industries were just nearing completion; within four years the C.I.O. had matched the growth of the A.F. of L. during nearly sixty years. Labor was on the march, and John L. Lewis was chief bugler. Collective bargaining in good faith had become the law of the land, but the good faith still required greater definition and wider demonstration. Many employers continued to fight bitter rear-guard actions and labor's new zeal sometimes overwhelmed her judgment.

Farmers were beginning to achieve a certain stability and prosperity, after nearly twenty years of uncertainty and risk. The problem of migratory agricultural workers, the "Okies" of John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, was under poignant debate and there were prophecies of greater dust bowls to come.



But for each new problem there was a new crop of Federal agencies and experiments were legion.

The comparison of alternative economic systems had been extremely frank and lively during the 1930's. An unmodified capitalism had few public defenders. Socialism and communism were publicly offered as viable alternatives and seriously considered in many sectors. Even fascism had its American exponents, one or two of whom nearly achieved intellectual respectability. Technocracy, Social Credit, and other panaceas attracted followers. Men could write books with titles like "Toward a Soviet America" or "The Coming American Fascism" without being regarded as crackpots or traitors. In retrospect the discussion seems often to have been rather irresponsible, but it was lively.

The social landscape was filled with voluntary movements for social reform. After 1935 innumerable "united fronts" appeared, most of them by careful and secret contrivance, and the most discerning citizens often found it difficult to distinguish the *bona fide* and honorable from the *sub rosa* and nefarious. Nearly everybody who expressed any social concern about anything was caught in a Communist front organization sooner or later. After all, Mussolini, Hitler, the Spanish Civil War, and all that these things stood for—these were regarded as the common enemies of democracy and decency in the world. Most independent citizens quietly withdrew from "united fronts" when alignments became clear; a few of the more hardy or foolhardy ones attempted to "throw the commies out"; others were drawn irretrievably into the web and the names of a few have become symbols of treason in these later years.

The effort had been made to prevent war by multilateral alliances against fascism. This strategy was tarnished at Munich in 1938, crippled by the Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939, and ultimately refashioned in the heat of war itself.

The social scene of 1955 is in striking contrast to that of 1939. So far as America is concerned, prosperity—unprecedented prosperity—is in the immediate background and foreground, rather than de-

pression. The crusading spirit of the New Deal is dead, but most of its central achievements have been preserved and some have been further developed. Social criticism, other than that actuated by political motives, has largely disappeared. The Socialist Party is no longer even a cantankerous goad, and the Communists have received the exposure and chastisement they had long deserved. Labor is strong and fairly stable, and employers by and large have accepted unions as part of the game, though there are notable exceptions, especially in the South. Farmers appear to be in a volatile state politically but are still prosperous. There are migrant workers in agriculture and industry, but they have been institutionalized. Profits are high, the national income is incredible, taxes are under control, and the national budget is still unbalanced without crisis or consternation.

In the United States there is widespread mistrust of talk about economic systems as such, though capitalism is back in favor, somewhat reproved but very fat. Most American thought on such matters appears now to be much more pragmatic and pluralistic; by the same token, it is more skeptical of all labels, panaceas, and monolithic systems. Reports from abroad would indicate that other nations, including some in the Communist sphere, are moving in the same direction.

Political questions have pushed economic affairs from the center of the stage, for the most part. International questions outrank domestic ones. Even those domestic ones that have come into new prominence, such as civil liberties and race relations, are viewed to considerable degree against the backdrop of world affairs. Geographical isolationism is dead, and there are those who fear that its successor may be American moral and economic imperialism. The United Nations organization stands as a continuing symbol of hope; and nuclear weapons continue to pose threats almost too dreadful for contemplation.

Voluntary action by citizens is in considerable disrepute. The fashion is that one must be careful, and that the decisions will be made by the proper authorities anyhow.

### To Our Friends and Readers:

Permit us on this occasion of our fifteenth anniversary to express our gratitude to our readers, contributors and supporters. We are grateful for your support in the past and are hopeful that we will continue worthy of your confidence in the future.

We would appreciate your frank criticisms of our past and will be happy to have any suggestions

you may make for the future. We are also particularly desirous of extending our constituency.

Contributions for Associates run from \$10.00 to \$100.00 including a subscription to the magazine, and can be deducted (except for the subscription price) for tax purposes at the end of the year.

THE EDITORS.

# The Crisis Through the Years . . .

## Defining the Crisis—

By Crisis we do not mean any of these secondary symptoms of a critical condition (crises of democracy, war, empire and defense). We mean *the* Crisis itself; not the crisis of some segment of the social order, but of the whole social order. We mean that as Protestant Christians we stand confronted with the ultimate crisis of the whole civilization of which we are a part and whose existence has made possible the survival of our type of faith and our type of church.

. . . The British are fighting for the kind of civilization which has made Protestantism possible. To deny this is to deny history. . . .

What then is the Crisis? The Crisis is that the most powerful state in Europe has sworn to destroy our North Atlantic civilization, and during 1940 has proved its ability to keep its word. On the eastern shores of the Atlantic, freedom has disappeared from an entire continent. Britain alone stands guard against the westward march of tyranny, and the British Isles are now under continuous bombardment as a prelude to the final assault.

But this is not a fight for Britain. It is a fight for freedom, and wherever men fight for freedom they fight for us. The fight is between the free peoples of the entire North Atlantic area and the tyrants who would destroy their democratic way of life. . . .

The tragic irony of the hour is that so many of the men in America whom this revolution against Christian civilization most concerns seem to be least aware of its implications. The freedom of these men to speak and write depends upon the existence of a certain type of civilization. Yet they talk and act as if they believed that, whoever wins, religion-as-usual like business-as-usual will be the order of the day in America after the war. The fact is that if Hitler carries out his declared designs there is not going to be any religion-as-usual, at least as far as Christians are concerned.

The choice before us is clear. Those who choose to exist like parasites off the liberties which others fight to secure for them will end by betraying the Christian ethic and the civilization which has developed out of that ethic.—*Editorial, February 10, 1941*

## Soberness in Victory

It was most fortunate that America received the news of the victory in Europe more quietly than a quarter century ago. The hysteria of the former occasion was absent for various reasons.

. . . These reasons are all comprehensive in the magnitude of the drama in which we are involved. Everything which is happening is really too big and too complex for our comprehension. The war which has ended in victory was the costliest and most global conflict of human history. It has left even the wealthiest victor nations shaken in the very structure of their economic life; and it has reduced Europe to a physical and economic as well as political chaos. The price of victory has been very high.

The defeated enemy has been more completely destroyed than any nation in history, at least since the

day when the Romans destroyed Carthage. That was partly because the nation was ruled by a tyranny which was able to hold a beaten nation in battle until almost the last ounce of life blood was drawn from it. The same tyranny has also been able to destroy every crystallization of new political life during its long and terrible reign; so that Germany is a political vacuum as well as an economic desert. It is still a question whether our obliteration bombing, which has reduced the whole of western and central Germany to a rubble heap, was necessary for victory, though no less an authority than Von Runstedt has affirmed that precision bombing was indispensable to our victory. If it was necessary for victory we have another proof of the total character of total war.

The cost of this war has been so great for both victors and vanquished that many will undoubtedly arise to remind us of their predictions of its price and of their apprehensions about its consequences. We will have to remind them that some of their apprehensions were wrong. They had declared that we could not engage in this struggle without losing our democratic institutions. These have in fact survived the extraordinary exertions of the conflict very well. But it will be more important to call their attention to the fact that the war was an alternative to slavery. As the victorious armies liberated one concentration camp after another and unearthed the hideous cruelties which were practiced in them, they gave us some hint of what the dimensions of total slavery are like, from which we escaped by a total war.

However we measure the conflict, whether in terms of the evil we opposed, or the evils we had to commit in opposing it, or the destruction of the vanquished or the price of the victors, the dimensions of the drama in which we are involved are staggering. It is well that we should be shocked into sobriety by the magnitude of historical events and should be prompted to humility and piety by a contemplation of the tasks which still confront us. All of them are really beyond our best wisdom.

. . . They (occupation, preventing starvation) will not be done too well in any event because of their magnitude; but they will be done with a greater degree of wisdom if they are done with a measure of humility. If we had more awe before the tragic punishments which God has already visited upon a nation which took law into its own hands we would at least be saved the folly of spoiling the divine punishment by our own efforts to add and subtract. We might well remember that the greatest difficulty which a vanquished nation finds in turning from the "sorrow of this world" (despair) to the "sorrow of God" (repentance) is that the pride of the victor tends to obscure the divine punishments.

Let us therefore not seek to reduce the dimension of the history in which we are involved, so that it might be made more compatible with the limits of our powers. Let us recognize that we have faced the mystery of evil and of good, of tragedy and of victory, of divine judgment and mercy in more tremendous proportions than ever before in history. The humble

consciousness of the inadequacy of our wisdom for the tasks which confront us may infuse our wisdom with grace and thus render it more adequate for the issues we must face.—*Editorial, May 28, 1945*

### World Community and World Government

A Christian knows, or ought to know, that an adequate Christian political ethic is not established merely by conceiving the most ideal possible solution for a political problem. He must, in all humility, deal with the realities of human nature, as well as the ideal possibilities. He must know that the intransigent elements in every historic situation are derived not merely from the sin of Russia or some other nation, or from the stupidity of statesmen, but from the difficulty which all of us find in conforming our actions to our highest ideals. It is very difficult to establish peaceful and just human communities, because the collective behavior of mankind is even more egoistic than individual behavior; our job is therefore to establish a tolerable community within the limits set by man's recalcitrance.

The problem of international relations in the present day is that we have minimal bases for an international community and we must extend them; but we cannot create a world government without more communal bases than we now possess. Our modern utopians are under the illusion that governments create community. The fact is that governments presuppose community and in turn perfect it; but they cannot create it. Communities are created by more organic processes than the fiat of a constitution. They rest upon mutual trust and other forces of cohesion. National communities possess various forces of cohesion such as a common language and culture, common traditions and common concepts of law and morals. The international community lacks all these forms of cohesion. It has only a certain degree of mutual economic dependence, a certain measure of religious and moral sense of obligation transcending the national loyalty; and finally the fear of mutual destruction. This third element has been strengthened immeasurably by the prospects of atomic warfare and has encouraged the hope of some people that we might be able to scare each other into the acceptance of a universal sovereignty. But there is no record of nations coalescing because they feared each other; though some have arrived at a wider partnership because they feared a common foe.

Our immediate situation is that only minimal forms of mutual trust exist between the nations and that there is a particularly deep chasm between Russia and the West. There is no possibility of purely constitutional instruments bridging that chasm if quite a number of other, more provisional bridges are not thrown across it first. . . . Lest we be tempted to think that only Russia stands in the way of the abolition of the veto, we would do well to remember that the United Nations charter would never have passed the Senate if the veto provision had not been written into it.

*Reinhold Niebuhr, March 4, 1946*

### The Church and Race Segregation

Like every society of human beings the Church is rooted in the culture, and at the more elemental levels

of feeling and action the secular pattern overlies and all but stifles spiritual intention. Pronouncements by church bodies on economic and political questions often have sharp repercussions, but when the basic pattern of group relationships is challenged a deep and ominous rumbling of dissent is heard. It may be expected in the present instance—to the extent that the statement is taken at its face value.

The Church is forever in danger of shunning absolute judgments that are clearly dictated by Christian principle for fear of putting too great a strain on its "fellowship." It is under that kind of treatment that the fellowship evaporates. Unity in diversity is a valid ideal but one that is always in danger of corruption. The moral judgment now crystallizing about race segregation is akin to that which condemned slavery. It will not be abolished even in the Church at one stroke, but the important thing is that a congregation and no denomination should ever have a clear conscience while conforming to the pattern. If they can do so then the Christianity to which they subscribe is not that of the New Testament. Just as the relationship between a Hitlerized church and a free church was wholly artificial, so the kinship between people who believe that race segregation at the altar of God does no violence to the Gospel and those who affirm the contrary is strained and unauthentic. Had the controversy over the Christian testimony concerning war been an issue between people who hold war to be a normal pattern of relationships and people who affirm the moral necessity of eradicating it, the church could not have sustained the shock. There could be no unity in such fundamental diversity. It is difficult to see the race issue in any different light.—*Editorial, April 1, 1946*

### Marshall Plan

The decision about the Marshall Plan may well be the great post-war decision for America. During the war it was generally supposed that the one point for concentration after the war would be the turning away from isolation through full support of the United Nations. But the nation was quite well prepared for that step, and there was not as great danger of our failure there as there is now of our failure in connection with the rehabilitation of Europe through the implementation of the Marshall Plan. Also, it is probable that if we do fail in this matter, there will not be enough health or freedom in the world to preserve the United Nations from futility. So, is there not good reason to say that if it was right for the churches of America to use their influence to organize public opinion in favor of the San Francisco charter, it is now their responsibility to lead in the formation of a public opinion that will insist on action to meet the desperate need of Europe?

. . . It is not enough to support the Marshall Plan in general. It is equally important to resist those who would sabotage it. It is hard to see how there can be another chance for a free Europe or for a peaceful world if that plan fails. Its cost is small compared with the cost to America if Europe is not delivered from hunger and despair. Its purpose is one that for Christians is a compelling obligation.

*Editorial, October 27, 1947*



## The Atomic Bomb

The bitter dilemma that we faced when the fact of the atomic bomb first shocked us and that we face today is this: On the one hand, we know that a third world war would probably destroy the centers of population and the institutions of large parts of the world and that it might gravely injure the physical and mental health of future generations; on the other hand, this appalling prospect should not cause this nation or other nations to yield to the blackmail of any power that may threaten to use the bomb. If we could say that the only thing in the world that matters is the prevention of a third world war, our moral problem would be comparatively simple. But, it is our responsibility to work to preserve the peace without clearing the way for any nation or group of nations to use the bomb with impunity to enslave others.

... The most profound difference that Christianity should make to our feeling about the atomic bomb is that it should enable men to live with faith in a world that will never again be as secure as it once thought itself to be, that will always face the possibility that its progress will be wiped out by catastrophe. Our greatest danger may not be that of actual atomic destruction, but rather the danger that humanity may become so obsessed by this fear of destruction that life will be narrowed to the search for security and lose most of its meaning. This is essentially a religious problem; the faith that human history is in the hands of God, who in Christ identified himself with men, can deliver us from the great fear.—*Editorial, October 17, 1949*

## The Problem of Asiatic Communism

... But even in Japan one can feel the great difference between the problem created by communism in the Western World. Unless Americans come to see this they will be quite unprepared to do the right things to prevent the continued spread of communism in Asia.

Back of everything else that I can say is, of course, the poverty of Asia. Social revolution is overdue and it is natural that people in Asia turn to any social movement that has a program for dealing with their poverty and a political strategy for putting this program into effect. Whether or not this program in ten years will raise the standard of living is at the moment less important than the fact that communism is the only movement that has a program that seems drastic enough to be relevant to the economic needs of Asia. Western democracy offers freedom but Prime Minister Nehru, who loves freedom as much as any of us, is quite right when he says that "in backward areas where people are hungry, they do not care about freedom of the individual but about food and clothing."

The people who should be able to value freedom most in a country that has had comparatively little experience of it are the intellectuals. Here one finds another difficulty. Communism has a great attraction for intellectuals because it does provide a total view of life which, in the absence of a better one, is very persuasive. To a Christian, communism as a total philosophy of life is superficial and in many ways false. But Christians should be able to understand why communism as a system of thought and as a movement that calls for

commitment makes a strong appeal to people who have no other faith or system of thought. Moreover, I found that many Japanese intellectuals are in the stage in which many Western intellectuals were in the nineteen thirties. They see only the better side of communism. They are impressed by basic Marxist theory and on the mainland, in China, communism is now putting its best foot forward. They have very little understanding of the oppressive side of communism which has come to bulk so large in the minds of Americans and Western Europeans.

We see communism as an instrument of Russian power in the cold war and we greatly fear the extension of Russian power over the whole world. This is an aspect of communism that does not receive the emphasis in Asia that we put upon it. I believe that we are right in our fears but it is often difficult to convince even non-communist students in Japan on this point. Indeed the propaganda job that has been done with the word "imperialism" by communists in Asia is extraordinary. Lenin taught that imperialism is an inevitable expression of capitalism. The converse of this is now widely believed: that a non-capitalistic country will not be imperialistic! This means that Russian power is assumed to be innocent. This propaganda is all the more effective because it began as honest analysis and it is now devoutly believed as a part of the Marxist-Leninist dogma. Even many non-communists regard it as sound "social science." The words "capitalism" and "imperialism" are magic words of condemnation.

We see communism as it has developed in Russia and, with more confidence about detail, in eastern Europe. I found it necessary in speaking to Japanese students (mostly non-communist students in colleges with a Christian background) to urge them to study the effect of communism in eastern Europe. There one can see the later stages of communism as political tyranny. I tried to explain in elementary terms the way in which communism moves from the tolerant "united front" stage to that kind of oppression. It is natural for people who do not have knowledge or experience that confirms what I said about eastern European communism to brush it all off as so much American propaganda. It is also natural for people who have no such knowledge or experience to assume that communism in their country will be different.—*John C. Bennett, August 7, 1950*

## Congressional Investigations

Any more investigations by Congressional committees or by administrative agencies should take into account the following considerations.

1. Acts and associations often had a very different meaning in the 1930's from what they would have had in the 1950's. It is almost dangerous to say so in the present state of mind on the subject, but communism itself had a different moral meaning from what it has today. At that time, many people gave some support to Communist causes because they saw in communism the chief opponent of Fascism which was the form of totalitarianism about which most was known. . . .

2. We must distinguish between decisions about policy made at another time and under quite different circumstances, and the judgments about those decisions made today by people who are wise after the event. It is also

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important to distinguish between disloyalty and all matters of judgment under such circumstances. Many decisions were made while Russia was our much needed ally in war. . . .

3. Always the distinction must be made between those who seek various kinds of social change by democratic methods in a way that is entirely above board and those who may advocate some of the same changes but who do so as a part of Stalinist strategy. It is plain that Senator McCarthy does not recognize this distinction.

*Editorial, December 8, 1952*

## The Churches and McCarthyism

Events of the past fortnight have brought some easement to the deepening apprehension of informed citizens over the uninhibited and unobstructed advance of "McCarthyism."

. . . The fact that both of these arrests to the orgy of investigations (McCarthy's capitulation to indignation on the J. B. Matthews appointment and the President's endorsement of protests by spokesmen of the three major American faiths) were in defense of the clergy argues the timeliness of a re-examination and redefinition of the role and responsibility of the churches with respect to this grave menace to national well-being. Three points deserve underscoring.

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1. It is important to take the full measure of the struggle, and the character and determination of those who wage it.

No one who understands the aims and methods of Senator McCarthy and his associates will suppose that his defeat in the Matthews incident is more than a temporary and tactical withdrawal.

. . . Indeed, though Senator McCarthy is the most spectacular and perhaps the most sinister symbol of the evil, it is possible to exaggerate his personal importance, and to be lulled into delusion that his curtailment would eliminate the problem.

2. It is important to define more precisely what are the real issues in the present struggle.

It is usually described in terms of the "vindication of freedom." What is at stake is not merely the protection of the "fundamental freedoms" of speech, of thought, of teaching and of public activity—great and precious as these values are. "Freedom" has become a weasel-word of contemporary parlance, all too often employed to justify irresponsibility and even license. What is at stake is the preservation of values at once far more elemental and far more essential to a sound society—*truth and justice*—upon which any system of personal freedoms must be grounded. . . .

3. Finally, it is important to broaden the struggle from the protection of particular groups within the community to the safeguarding of the entire citizenry.

The issues at stake are not in the relations of particular bodies of citizens, whether teachers or preachers, and government. They are issues which concern all men as citizens.

It is high time that the churches and their clergy came clearly and boldly forth from the special protections which they are always tempted to erect about themselves and their prerogatives, often buttressed by a specious interpretation of the "separation of church and state," and took their stand simply as American institutions and American citizens, seeking no protection which is not equally available to any other organization or person, and demanding no right and no privilege which is not equally guaranteed to everyone else.

*Editorial, August 3, 1953*

## American Leadership in the Cold War

It would be nice if Christian humility could reinforce this common sense (of the American People) and we could express a faith which can set limits to the pride of a great nation. Undoubtedly our lack of wisdom in the complexities of international politics is due not so much to ignorance as to the vainglorious imaginations of a nation which bestrides this narrow world like a huge colossus! A nation as strong as ours must possess some resources not immediately obvious among us, if it would escape the blindness of mere self-esteem.

If our power tempts us to pride, the easy and comfortable circumstances of our brief existence as a nation make it difficult for us to exercise the patience which is now necessary to live with, and to outlast, an evil system. This is not a matter of great exertions for a decade but a matter of living under stress for a century or two. We must acquire the humility to be sufferable to our friends and the patience to outlast an unscrupulous foe.—*Editorial, October 18, 1954*